

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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SHORT, SHORT STORY

He said he wasn't much interested in lodge meetings any more. He said there were so many new faces that he almost felt a stranger in his own lodge. He admitted in an aside that he had not been attending lodge for a long time except for the occasional special function.

He said, to satisfy himself—of course there was a lot of work to do round the house, anyway it was a real trial to get parking space near the temple. How he hated to walk a couple of blocks.

Anyway, going to lodge was an old old story, reading minutes, balloting, passing accounts, listening to the Secretary reading letters that were not overly interesting. Such and so on. No, he didn't think at breakfast time that he would bother going out that evening.

Come supper time and he seemed a bit changed from his attitude over the morning coffee. He seemed excited—a let's-get-going jut to his jaw. His better half suggested some chore as an evening activity—no sir—no working around the house that night. He was going to lodge.

Yes, it was lodge night and that's where he was headed for.

During the day he had been reading the lodge notice and his latest copy of "Masonry in Manitoba," which accompanied it. Formerly, he merely glanced through these official communications—they had not appealed to him as the link connecting him by the postal route with thousands of other Masons all over the country.

He was stirred to a new understanding when he read these words, "the primary purposes of Masonry are to enlighten the mind, arouse the conscience, stimulate the noble and generous impulses of the human heart. It seeks to promote the best type of manhood based upon the practice of Brotherly Love and the Golden Rule. When these results have been accomplished the mission of Masonry has been achieved."

He read these words over and over again. He resolved that he had work to do and the place to begin was in lodge. Tonight was the night of the Regular Meeting and that was his destination. Yes, he would be in his place where he had long neglected the things he should have done. He'd be there.

Moral: Never underestimate the influence of Masonry in your life nor your personal influence upon the men you associate with behind our tyled doors.

PLANNING YOUR PROGRAM

November is election month in all the lodges of the Manitoba Jurisdiction. This is the month when we see many faces in our lodge rooms who throughout the year are somewhat passive in their lodge attendance. Then some come to lodge because they want to cast a ballot for the leaders of the future.

It is a time of testing. We want to appraise the qualities of the men on the rising rungs of the ladder and ascertain to what degree they are fitted to occupy offices of great responsibility. There is no royal road to Masonic advancement. The worth and merit of the man is the yardstick which ought always to be used when an election of officers takes place.

In the immediate future more than a hundred brethren will be elected as Worshipful Masters in as many lodges in Manitoba. To them will be delivered the heritage of the years and in their hands will rest the destiny of their particular lodge.

If you should happen to be one of this truly select group of Craftsmen let me ask very sincerely if you have laid any definite plans out on your trestle board? Are you planning? Are you content to take things as they come and depend upon luck or some other elusive factor to carry you through the year?

No doubt some of the Masters-elect have read the messages which have appeared in these pages from time to time. Our hope is that not a few will be encouraged to leave the beaten track and strike out a new pathway which is sorely needed in a great many lodges throughout the jurisdiction.

We don't know the potentialities of the different lodges and it would be a mistake to chart a uniform course for all or any of them in the mass. A man who has been chosen by his fellows as Worshipful Master should possess all the qualities of leadership and this pre-supposes that he will have thoughts and ideas of his own for the advancement of Freemasonry in his lodge.

We have a word for the member of the lodge who is not an officer. He must realize that regular attendance works two ways. It benefits the lodge and it helps the individual. When you attend your lodge remember that the right attitude will bring its own reward. Never mind your personal prejudice to the good old days—look for a betterment in these present days which you can help to become equally good days in our own time.

Even the men who sit along the seats which line the lodge room can have their lives enriched by association of kindred spirits. In discussions you may say something and your voice might inspire some brother to better things.

We need men in our membership who see beyond the present. Men who live their Masonry in every attitude of life. Men who practice the Virtues: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, which still have a vital place in the lives of men.

Looking around and about us we see too much evidence of selfishness which has engulfed the whole career of many, many people, and we should not be foolish enough to presume that we are not untouched.

Officers elect and members of all our lodges: You are urged to plan your program together. Each has a place in the lodge and there is work to do. Go forward then in the spirit of Brotherhood and your influence will surely be felt far beyond the confines of the local lodge room.

THE OLD PAST MASTER MUSES

Several years ago my telephone rang at 3 a.m. and as I have always been somewhat nervous when calls come through the night I was concerned as to what had happened. My surprise was soon dispelled. A voice, that of a brother of my lodge pleasantly enquired if I could tell him who was Master of our Lodge at the time. I won't tell you my reaction and you can guess the rest.

This episode came to mind a few evenings past and I wondered how many members today actually know the name of the Master of their own Lodge. And there are many other simple questions which would bring some rather interesting answers from our members.

For example, when and by whom was Freemasonry introduced into Manitoba? In what year was the Grand Lodge of Manitoba formed? And perhaps many do not know the name of our Grand Master or our Grand Secretary. If you want to make a test then try these or other simple questions on a member of your lodge.

And to what does this all add up? Men are too busy with their daily affairs to determine for themselves the value of present day contacts and the impact of history on their comforts and blessings.

Thousands of excellent fellows and you may be one, have become victims of the check-book habit. Quite content to mail a remittance in payment of your lodge dues, you thus practice your Masonry by the dollar sign only. It simply won't work.

We will indeed be the losers if we deny this indifference and neglect our personal responsibility to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves.

We hear about hidden dangers. Well, our danger lies not so much in a fifth column. It lies indeed in a first column of unconscionable men who are one hundred per cent members in their daily protestations and ten per cent Masons in their daily routine of neglect.

Harsh words, do we hear you say? Maybe they will stir some dry bones into activity.

SAVING

Money isn't the most important thing to save. It is the least. Better to save your self-respect, your honor, your individual independence, your pride in being, and your health. These, and many more, are far better than gold. And their dividends are never passed.

He saves most who gives most away. Like clipping the blooms of flowers. In doing so the more and better they blossom. My pansy bed gives evidence to this statement. People who are forever distributing their blessings themselves are blessed.

Commerce is carried on successfully by constant interchange. What good would it do, and what a deathless saving, did manufacturers and all producers merely hoard? Everything would become static and useless. There are those who think that they save by paying the lowest wages possible. They lose. The higher the wages, the higher is the efficiency of the worker.

The saving of money, however, is a practical procedure, because it gives one a feeling of security and helps to save one's self-respect. And when it comes to the making of an article of any sort, it cannot be made too well, with the best of materials. By buying the best, though it may cost more, you save in the long run and are better satisfied.

More people rust out than wear out. They put themselves into idle storage, thinking that is the way to prolong their lives. But such people are dead and don't know it. Like drones they sleep their lives away. Bank yourself by giving yourself away to as many others as you can and you will learn what it is to live rich. The only kind of wealth of which we can proudly boast is the wealth that we plant all about us in people.

Never think that the one who courageously abides by his principles is sacrificing anything. He isn't. He's putting something aside that neither rust nor decay can ever touch. He is saving himself for a more important job, and for greater usefulness to his fellow man. And right here can be slipped in that immortal saying from the Bible: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

—George Matthew Adams,
in *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*.

NOTES AND COMMENT

At the beginning of the year a series of five booklets was prepared and published by Grand Lodge through its Committee on Masonic Education.

Four of these booklets were for the information and guidance of petitioners seeking membership into the Craft. The fifth was particularly addressed to the Worshipful Master.

There has come to our notice signs that these booklets are not being issued just as was intended by the Committee. We would emphasize at this point the fact that publications issued by Grand Lodge should not be considered in the same category as commercial circulars nor advertising media to promote business.

We have been importuned in past years to provide some authoritative data which would help the newly admitted Mason as well as our members and officers in general and it was thought that a forward advance had been achieved when the booklets we refer to were published early in 1949.

The attention of all officers is drawn to these important books and it is hoped that with the passage of nearly a year that they have been helpful to our young members and of real assistance in educating them regarding Freemasonry—of course it is realized that regardless of the value behind this phase of Masonic education we will always find some lodge officers who are out of harmony with the project and in consequence carry on in the old familiar fashion.

Sometimes the writer thinks it is a blessing that we change our officers once every twelve months. By doing so we get an opportunity to clear the decks of outworn habits and non-co-operative workmen. It should be remembered that the principal officers of every lodge are elected to office by the members and the latter have some responsibility in the type of leader they select to rule and govern the lodge.

Make up your mind that with the advent of a new slate of officers soon to be installed that you will do your bit in an endeavour to raise the tone and quality of the regular meeting. Don't be satisfied with routine procedure, passing accounts, reading correspondence and opening and closing. Lend a hand and make your contribution by suggesting and participating in the extra little touch that will add to the interest and the value of the monthly meeting in the lodge room.

You can do a big job if you will only work out a plan.

ANOTHER OLD LODGE

Two letters from the King, in which His Majesty congratulated the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No. 1, Grand Lodge of Scotland, were read at a special meeting to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the earliest meeting of the Lodge. This is the oldest minute of any existing Lodge in the world.

The date of the minute is July 1599. We would gladly insert a copy but the spelling is so ancient it would not appear that many of our readers would be interested.

A copy of the Banquet Program was sent our Grand Secretary by the Grand Secretary of Scotland and it may be examined at M.W. Brother Pilkey's office.

We notice in the program a copy of the earliest extant minute of any Lodge Meeting in England. This was extracted from the minute book of the Lodge of Edinburgh and is headed "At New-castell the 20 day off May 1641."

After congratulating the Lodge on the interesting milestone in its long history, the King thanked the members for a specially produced volume which he received a short time ago giving details of the outstanding events in the life of Mary's Chapel.

It is hoped our Library Committee will make an endeavor to secure a copy of this volume for our shelves. Undoubtedly it will contain some rare information which covers the period before Grand Lodges came into existence.

OUR ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS

The 1949 volume was mailed to all the lodge secretaries during the first week in October. This book contains more than 300 pages and there is a wide selection of material from which you can obtain the latest information concerning the Craft, especially as it applies to the jurisdiction of Manitoba.

We would draw attention to the special notice appearing on the front fly leaf reading thus:

"On receipt of this copy the Master will arrange to have such portions of the address of the Most Worshipful the Grand Master, and the District Deputy Grand Master of the District, as he may desire, read at the first Regular Meeting of the Lodge thereafter. He should also arrange for the reading of the reports, or extracts therefrom, of the Standing Committees, at subsequent meetings."

We have no means of ascertaining how many brethren read the Annual Proceedings each year but when it is realized that it takes three hundred printed pages to cover our annual reports we can reasonably conclude that there is something more than statistics issued by Grand Lodge.

There is absolutely no reason to be short of interesting material for the meetings of your lodge. Here it is all ready to be used in accordance with the notice on the fly leaf which we mentioned previously.

Should a second copy of the Proceedings be required by any Lodge then upon application the Grand Secretary will mail it.

Surely it is not too much to ask the members, especially lodge officers, to read the proceedings of their own Grand Lodge.